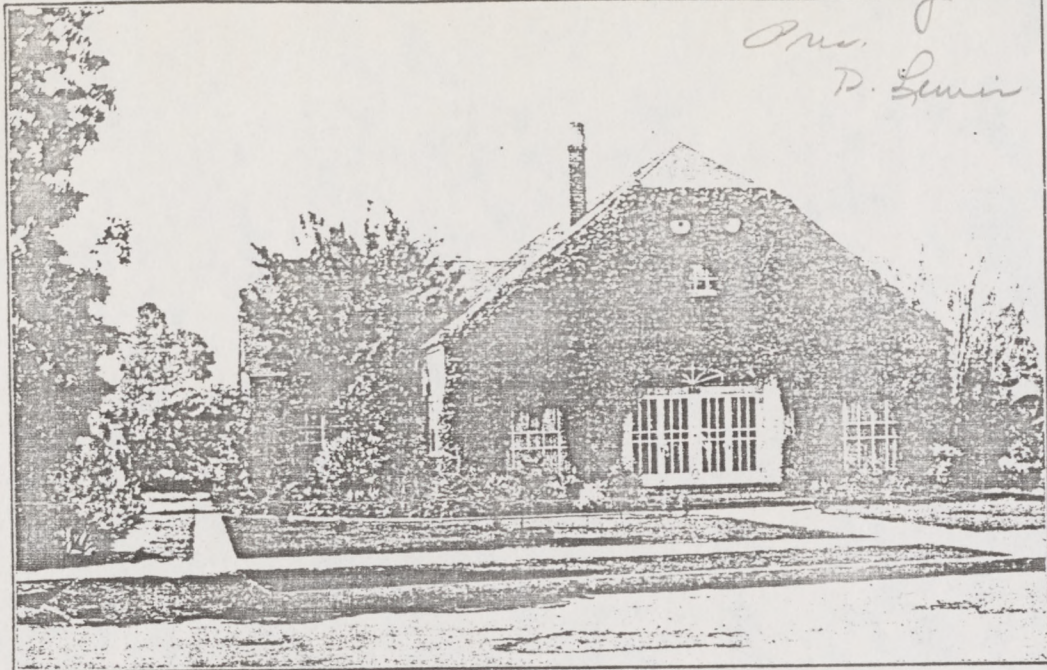
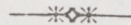


*Lemon to each person attending  
Past President day 4-25-84*

*Pres.  
D. Lewis*



Van Nuys Women's Club House, Van Nuys, Calif.



## Van Nuys the Ideal Home City

By ESTELLE W. MOEHN,  
President, Van Nuys Woman's Club

VAN NUYS, the physical center of this marvelous San Fernando Valley, within the city limits of Los Angeles, yet far enough from the crush and turmoil of the city, is in many ways the ideal home town. Here are all the attractions of the city, but with the charm and beauty of a very busy suburb, all within a few minutes' drive of Hollywood, Beverly Hills, the charming old Mission of San Fernando, or the great metropolis of Los Angeles. Here the tree-lined streets form vistas through which one glimpses the everlasting hills, on the south, the Santa Monicas, on the north and east the Verdugo hills. The attractive homes are set on lawns, wide enough to secure privacy and space, brilliant with many colored flowers and landscaped pleasingly. The schools, churches, shops and theaters are adequate for all needs. Truly here is an ideal home-site!

Best of all, we think, is the spirit of friendliness and welcome everywhere evident and, which we feel, is typified by your Woman's Club. The Van Nuys Woman's Club began sixteen years ago as a mission study-class, with about thirty members, meeting from house to house. Today it owns its own well furnished clubhouse, free of debt, has a membership of over three hundred members, as well as a Junior Auxiliary of forty-five young women.

The picture shown is that of the present clubhouse, which is already outgrown, and which will be remodeled with an additional

auditorium, erected on the adjoining lot to care for our rapidly increasing membership. The club is active along all cultural, benevolent and civic-betterment lines, having for its major project the further planting of all new streets with shade trees, the proper care of lawns and parking and co-operation in all park and playground matters. The varied interests and tastes of the members are well served by the variety of sections; Music, specializing in opera reading; Arts and Crafts, specializing on Browning the past year; California History and Landmarks; Legislation, the study of business law; Home Economics; Drama, with gymnasium work, and the Garden Section. The members of this section are very enthusiastic, as the possibilities for the home garden are here limitless. This was evidenced by the very successful flower show held here in June, when our amateur gardeners vied with the commercial growers in putting on a really wonderful display of gladioli, roses, iris, etc., proving that conditions here are especially advantageous for the growing of bulbs. The meetings of this section are held in the beautiful gardens of the members.

The club maintains a membership in the Chamber of Commerce, its representative being a director of the same; an annual scholarship prize for the High School, and a very active social service department with monthly clinics for the children of the community and an educational course for young mothers.



Daily News  
Van Nuys May 21 '88

## LOOKING BACK

# Woman's Club keeps pace with change in area

By ALEX KIMBALL  
Daily News Staff Writer

VAN NUYS — Just after the first decade of this century, as Van Nuys emerged from its grain-field roots to become more of a residential and business area, the need for a women's club to promote self-culture and serve the community surfaced.

It was met by a group of women that gathered in the living room of Mrs. Howard S. Trotter. By 1912, the Van Nuys Woman's Club had been formed and was recognized by the California Federation of Women's Clubs. It was incorporated in 1916.

At 76, the club is one of California's oldest women's clubs. Schools, individual students and numerous philanthropies have been the recipients of members' aid over the years, and the club's headquarters on Sylvan Street has survived the community's rapid growth to become one of the most recognized landmarks in the area. The building was declared a cultural and historical landmark by the Los Angeles Cultural Heritage Commission in 1978.

But it was five years after its formation before the fledgling club got that clubhouse.

As the membership quickly outgrew the size of the members' homes, the need for a clubhouse became apparent. Ida Bailey donated a lot on Virginia (now Sylvan) Street, and the club purchased an adjoining lot for \$550.

With a \$3,000 loan from Elizabeth Houghton, construction of the clubhouse began in 1917. The building was completed in time to hold the organization's annual meeting there on April 25, 1917.

The interior of the redwood building was improved in 1934 with the addition of a solarium, a stage, a kitchen and an extra bathroom. A caretaker's bungalow was also constructed on club property because the club members felt they couldn't keep up with day-to-day maintenance. A full-time caretaker still resides on the premises.

*Membership has varied*

Through the years, the club has had its ups and downs.

Dues, for example, started at \$1 per year. Over the 76 years, they've grown to \$15 annually. Membership, which had been more than 100, dwindled to less than 75 during World War II and climbed to an all-time high of 235 in 1953, according to Dorothea Neel, current president and a member since 1940.

"During the war, we lost quite a few members to the war effort at Lockheed and other defense industries," recalled Neel, who is serving her "sixth or seventh" term as president. "The trend of women working cost us most of our members in their 30s and 40s, at least 30 in 1940 alone."

The club's own war effort was strong despite the decrease in membership.

"We opened the club to Valley servicemen for hospitality . . . and started a child welfare program," said Neel. "We still try to serve most of the programs we developed back then."

The club continues to support a number of philanthropies, including the International Seeing-Eye Dog Foundation, the Salvation Army, Van Nuys Memorial Library, Alzheimer's disease research and the Olive View Medical Center.

One of its special programs is assistance in the care of newborn babies at Olive View.

"We knit garments such as clothes, booties and receiving blankets for newborns at the hospital," said Neel. "We try to provide a complete set for each baby. Last year, we made over 100 garments."

Neel's interest in Alzheimer's research is particular strong. She cared for her husband, a victim of Alzheimer's, for seven years before his death in 1986.

"People caring for Alzheimer's patients need assistance, too," she said. "I know from my experience that those people need a break during the week so they can run errands. We support organizations like the Bernardi Center that provide assistance to people who care for Alzheimer's patients."

Neel recently had a chance to personally check out another of the club's philanthropies. After breaking her hip in a fall on the street, Neel enrolled in the Meals for the Homebound Program run by the Bernardi Center.

"My friends have all been asking me whether it's a worthwhile program, and I think it is," she said.

## Gives out scholarships

The club has sponsored a number of scholarships for Valley students since 1925. It gives \$100 each to the boy and girl who show the most promise in the Van Nuys High School English Department and also sponsors a similar scholarship for nursing students.

Awards for English and patriotic essays are also part of the club's scholarship program at its "adopted" school, Sylvan Park School.

Although the club's ranks include more than 80 members between the ages of 40 and 90, new members are always welcome.

"We always need new members to keep our club vital, there's no doubt about that," Neel said.

10  
Copies



October 2, 1993

# Women's club finds itself victim of its own success

When you go down the list of all the issues the Sherman Oaks Women's Club is involved in, it's hard to understand why anyone would classify it as irrelevant.

Drug and alcohol abuse prevention, hazardous waste management, health care, illiteracy, care of the elderly, air and water pollution and opportunities for people with disabilities, among others.

All pressing issues of our time — all tackled every week in this clubhouse on Kester Avenue by women who too often see themselves written about in public print as relics in a rapidly changing society.

It's a bad rap against all women's clubs, they say — and it makes them mad.

"They made us sound like a bunch of old fuddy-duddies with nothing better to do than throw bake sales and potlucks," Jeanne Davis, literature chairwoman for the Sherman Oaks Women's Club, said at a recent meeting.

Davis and the others still are upset about a newspaper story written last year on the slow death of traditional women's clubs — how they have little to offer in their organizations to the "new woman" of today.

If providing books to children and teaching them how to read is old-fashioned; if visiting the elderly in convalescent homes and children in hospitals is passe; if trying to preserve this country's resources is no



DENNIS MCCARTHY

longer important to us — then, yes, these women probably are relics.

The kind of priceless relics we could use more of in this country.

They are not blind to reality. One look around this clubhouse and you can see that membership drives to get younger women to join the club are not going well.

The member rolls are thinning out. Fresh blood is not replacing members who have passed on or are too ill to attend meetings anymore.

The roof over their heads is owned by the club members, but it's getting tougher and tougher to make financial ends meet every month with fewer members.

Maybe they are the last of a dying breed, the women admit. But it's not because they aren't relevant to society anymore — not because all they do is throw bake sales and potlucks.

No, they're as relevant as any men's club — as any organization founded on commu-

nity service.

If anything, success is doing them in. The trailblazers of the women's movement have done such a good job in the General Federation of Women's Clubs, which began in 1890, that they've threatened their own existence in this country.

The mother of women's clubs — Jane Cunningham Croly, a New York newspaperwoman denied the right to cover a speech by Charles Dickens at the all-male New York Press Club in 1868 simply because she was a woman — did too good a job.

In a radical, often ridiculed notion at the time, she brought women together to form their own clubs. Who needed the men, anyway?

The rest, as they say, is history.

When push came to shove, no one pushed or shoved harder for child-labor laws, 8-hour workdays and equal pay for equal work than the General Federation of Women's Clubs.

No one went out on the front lines to demand a woman's rightful place in the workplace — from boardrooms to mail rooms — than women's clubs.

And now — in an ironic twist — when they need a fresh infusion of women to keep these clubs alive for future generations, the benefactors of all those early efforts for wo-

men's rights are too busy working and trying to make a living for their families to join a women's club.

While the General Federation of Women's Clubs has 10 million members worldwide in more than 40 countries, its membership languishes under half a million members in the massive United States.

So maybe the handwriting is on the wall for traditional women's clubs in America.

Maybe they did do too good a job in making this country the world's role model for women's rights and opportunities.

Maybe the Sherman Oaks Women's Club and other women's clubs out there will have to make do with the members they have now because today's woman is just too busy to join.

It's all right, they say. They'll keep going as long as they can. Providing literacy programs for children and a helping hand for the infirm and disabled.

They've been providing community service in the San Fernando Valley for more than 65 years, and they'll keep doing it until the last member turns out the clubhouse lights some day.

They ask only one thing in return. Don't call them old fuddy-duddies.

*Dennis McCarthy's column appears Tuesday, Thursday, Friday and Sunday.*



October 2, 1993

# Women's club finds itself victim of its own success

When you go down the list of all the issues the Sherman Oaks Women's Club is involved in, it's hard to understand why anyone would classify it as irrelevant.

Drug and alcohol abuse prevention, hazardous waste management, health care, illiteracy, care of the elderly, air and water pollution and opportunities for people with disabilities, among others.

All pressing issues of our time — all tackled every week in this clubhouse on Kester Avenue by women who too often see themselves written about in public print as relics in a rapidly changing society.

It's a bad rap against all women's clubs, they say — and it makes them mad.

"They made us sound like a bunch of old fuddy-duddies with nothing better to do than throw bake sales and potlucks," Jeanne Davis, literature chairwoman for the Sherman Oaks Women's Club, said at a recent meeting.

Davis and the others still are upset about a newspaper story written last year on the slow death of traditional women's clubs — how they have little to offer in their organizations to the "new woman" of today.

If providing books to children and teaching them how to read is old-fashioned; if visiting the elderly in convalescent homes and children in hospitals is passe; if trying to preserve this country's resources is no



DENNIS MCCARTHY

longer important to us — then, yes, these women probably are relics.

The kind of priceless relics we could use more of in this country.

They are not blind to reality. One look around this clubhouse and you can see that membership drives to get younger women to join the club are not going well.

The member rolls are thinning out. Fresh blood is not replacing members who have passed on or are too ill to attend meetings anymore.

The roof over their heads is owned by the club members, but it's getting tougher and tougher to make financial ends meet every month with fewer members.

Maybe they are the last of a dying breed, the women admit. But it's not because they aren't relevant to society anymore — not because all they do is throw bake sales and potlucks.

No, they're as relevant as any men's club — as any organization founded on commu-

nity service.

If anything, success is doing them in. The trailblazers of the women's movement have done such a good job in the General Federation of Women's Clubs, which began in 1890, that they've threatened their own existence in this country.

The mother of women's clubs — Jane Cunningham Croly, a New York newspaperwoman denied the right to cover a speech by Charles Dickens at the all-male New York Press Club in 1868 simply because she was a woman — did too good a job.

In a radical, often ridiculed notion at the time, she brought women together to form their own clubs. Who needed the men, anyway?

The rest, as they say, is history.

When push came to shove, no one pushed or shoved harder for child-labor laws, 8-hour workdays and equal pay for equal work than the General Federation of Women's Clubs.

No one went out on the front lines to demand a woman's rightful place in the workplace — from boardrooms to mail rooms — than women's clubs.

And now — in an ironic twist — when they need a fresh infusion of women to keep these clubs alive for future generations, the benefactors of all those early efforts for wo-

men's rights are too busy working and trying to make a living for their families to join a women's club.

While the General Federation of Women's Clubs has 10 million members worldwide in more than 40 countries, its membership languishes under half a million members in the massive United States.

So maybe the handwriting is on the wall for traditional women's clubs in America.

Maybe they did do too good a job in making this country the world's role model for women's rights and opportunities.

Maybe the Sherman Oaks Women's Club and other women's clubs out there will have to make do with the members they have now because today's woman is just too busy to join.

It's all right, they say. They'll keep going as long as they can. Providing literacy programs for children and a helping hand for the infirm and disabled.

They've been providing community service in the San Fernando Valley for more than 65 years, and they'll keep doing it until the last member turns out the clubhouse lights some day.

They ask only one thing in return. Don't call them old fuddy-duddies.

Dennis McCarthy's column appears Tuesday, Thursday, Friday and Sunday.



**VAN NUYS****Donations Help  
Save Woman's Club**

With financial help from other women's clubs, members of the Van Nuys Woman's Club are back in action at their quake-damaged Van Nuys clubhouse.

"We're going to stay here," said club President Neva Hines, 71, who feared repair bills would force members to leave their long-time Sylvan Street clubhouse. "What they have done is marvelous."

Two \$1,000 donations from the Westlake Woman's Club and the San Fernando Woman's Club, a \$2,000 donation from the California Federation of Women's Clubs and a \$15,000 short-term loan from a son of one of the club members will pay for repairs to the historic clubhouse. Club members also sold about \$1,000 worth of cookie recipe books.

The Northridge earthquake badly damaged the interior walls and fireplace of the 77-year-old building, which was named a city of Los Angeles historical-cultural monument in 1978.

Repair costs hit \$30,050 without a word of help from the Federal Emergency Management Agency, to which the club had applied. After depleting the club's bank accounts, the 56 members were still about \$2,000 short, forcing Hines to consider selling the property to keep the club solvent.

But then the telephone started ringing. Offers of aid came pouring in, restoring hope that monthly garden section meetings, card games, Bible readings and fund-raising meetings could again be held at the clubhouse.

By Wednesday, the group had paid for enough repairs to safely hold their first post-earthquake meeting. Hines was re-elected president because of her work preserving the clubhouse.

"I've never seen the whole group so happy," said 85-year-old Dorothea M. Neel, a former club president who attended a luncheon Wednesday at the clubhouse. "We're home again."

There is still work to be done, however. The club needs a renter to replace the city of Los Angeles Planning Department, which left the clubhouse after the earthquake. The department had been paying \$750 a month to conduct its hearings in the clubhouse auditorium.

But the club's members, many of whom are in their 70s, say they are up to the challenge of finding a new tenant—especially after surviving the earthquake.

"I think we took on a new attitude of togetherness," Neel said. "We're all very proud of what we have done to preserve our future."

—JEFF SCHNAUFER